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Newsletter

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THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN. In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the following:

Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, and more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens. We should then love them with true affection because we should learn to respect ourselves.¹

Taken from the famous treatise, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, this extract reflects the strong objections which she raised to women's status in England in the late eighteenth century. The Brigham Young University Library has recently acquired a first edition copy of this remarkable work which helped define the women's rights movement some two hundred years ago.

Born April 27, 1759, in London, Mary was part of a family with some class standing. Her grandfather Wollstonecraft through his business prowess managed to amass a considerable fortune. His only son from a second wife benefited from that fortune and was endowed with large sums of money. Unfortunately, the son's merchandising abilities were not those of his father, thus making it a challenge for him to stay afloat financially. He turned to farming but as a result of his poor financial management, his family was forced to change its residence fairly often. After fourteen years of marriage, he had retained just enough money to keep the transient family fed and clothed. Of his two living sons and three daughters, Mary was the second child, first daughter. Her older brother, Ned, was the favored child (and grandchild) to such a degree that the bright daughter was frequently neglected, chided, and shunned. The sense of rootlessness,

combined with obvious parental biases which were not in her favor, had a definite influence upon Mary's opinions developed later in life. "The overt preference given to Ned in terms of love and money stung her quite as sharply as any of the injustices of her life."² As a result, she developed early a detestation of cruelty of all kinds and a resourceful independence.

Mary's father had a habit of allowing his alcohol to excite his already active temper. His often violent actions, which were intended to reduce the children to submission, resulted in Mary's indignation rather than humility and developed in her an attitude of strength and superiority. Her inborn sense of justice and equity prompted her physical intercession in parental quarrels. She would throw herself between her father and his victim, full intending to personally receive the blows meant for her mother. The repeated coping with such trama resulted in an "exquisite sensibility, soundness of understanding, and decision of character which were the leading features of her mind through the whole course of her life."³

With her mother's death in 1780, Mary and her sisters left home to earn their own living. Mary worked as a teacher, a governess and then began writing fiction and non-fiction for the publishing house of James Johnson. She began to build her life on a wholly new set of associates. She circulated in a radical group that included Johnson (publisher of most of her works), William Godwin (author of *Political Justice*), Tom Paine (author of *Common Sense*), Thomas Holcroft and William Blake. Philosophical ideas, current politics and literary projects were discussed in the social meetings of these influential individuals. At such a gathering in the year 1791, Paine mentioned the idea of a book on women's rights to Mary. He had heard the stunning statements made in Paris by Condorcet on the subject of equal education and civil status for women, and felt that the subject needed an advocate in England. Why shouldn't Mary be the spokeswoman to represent her own sex? A handful of writers had spoken in behalf of women's rights, but none had actually taken a definitive, major stand. Only small statements appeared here and there. Coleridge, for instance, planned on releasing women from domestic drudgery according to the following schedule:

VINDICATION
OF THE
RIGHTS OF WOMAN:
WITH
STRICTURES
ON
POLITICAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS.

By MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, N° 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1792.

Title page of the Lee Library's *Rights of Woman*.

*Let the married Women do only what is absolutely convenient and customary for pregnant women or nurses—Let the husbands do all the rest—and what will that be—? Washing with a machine and cleaning the house.*⁴

Pressure from Johnson led to Mary's undertaking the task. In preparing the text, there was no attempt made by the authoress to do extensive reading or research on the subject. Her assertions seemed to flow from her pen, and in a matter of some six weeks, the volume was completed. (Her intention to write a second, more exact volume was never realized.) On January 3, 1792, the completed volume of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was handed to the printer. In spite of its obvious lack of structure, *Rights of Woman* was an immediate best-seller, establishing Mary Wollstonecraft as a figure of some national stature. Critical comments regarding the volume were in the following vein: "There is in *A Vindication* an absence of sourness, falsity, or hysteria; her book remains remarkable both in its scope and its tone."⁵ The work explored most all of the commonly held viewpoints regarding sexuality, morality, character, modesty, forms of degradation, societal distinctions, parental relationships, and education. She treated each subject with the pointed arguments of one who had packed thirty years of accumulated experience into some 452 pages of print.

Mary did not suggest superiority of one sex over the other, nor did she advocate a universal role for mankind, as many critics of the day purported. *Rights of Woman* stated basically

*that women are human beings before they are sexual beings, that mind has no sex, and that society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slave and 'alluring mistresses,' denies them economic independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else.*⁶

The thrust of her argument dealt not with political questions but with equal educational and employment opportunities for women so that their resources might be tapped. In her own words, "I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves."⁷ In this

way, all men would prosper with an upgrading of more than fifty percent of the world's population.

Rights of Woman gave Mary a reputation which lasted throughout her life. However, her beliefs in women's rights did not preclude angular changes in the direction of her personal life as a woman. This was seen in her involvement in two romances, the first with the American, Captain Gilbert Imlay. In 1792 Mary went to France to observe the Revolution. There she became involved with Imlay but this relationship yielded only sorrow, a suicide attempt, travel and a daughter, Fanny. Public embarrassment became her lot as she tried to reconcile her professed beliefs with her present life's course. Idealistic attitudes toward love and devotion proved unjustified, and Imlay soon faded out of her life, leaving a vivid memory of an insensitive man.

Following her 1795 separation from Imlay, circulation among old friends sparked a new association between Mary and William Godwin, an early rational anarchist. The relationship was rocky, owing largely to the definite convictions of each party regarding family, love, and marriage. The avid *Rights of Woman* advocate had learned to keep an emotional distance, but also found herself to be a worshipper of domestic life. Godwin had been opposed to the institution of marriage for so many years that it was difficult for him to accept the change, in spite of his love and admiration for Mary. Somehow, their disagreements and subsequent reconciliations served to strengthen their mutual bond. Without telling their friends, they married March 29, 1797 and on August 30, Mary gave birth to the future author of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley. The baby was healthy but complications arose, and ten days following delivery, Mary died of septicæmia, abruptly ending the life of a woman out of place in the 1700's.

Mary Wollstonecraft balanced a strong character and understanding with a highly refined sensitivity. She wanted to see progress for all people, and did what she could to right the wrongs which she perceived. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* permanently influenced her circle of friends with its passionate advocacy of a woman's right

to a place in society equal to that of a man. The Harold B. Lee Library is pleased to have an original edition of this significant volume in its collection.

¹Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: Humboldt Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 157.

²Claire Tomalin, *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 5.

³William Godwin, *Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 9.

⁴Tomalin, *Wollstonecraft*, p. 103.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 108.

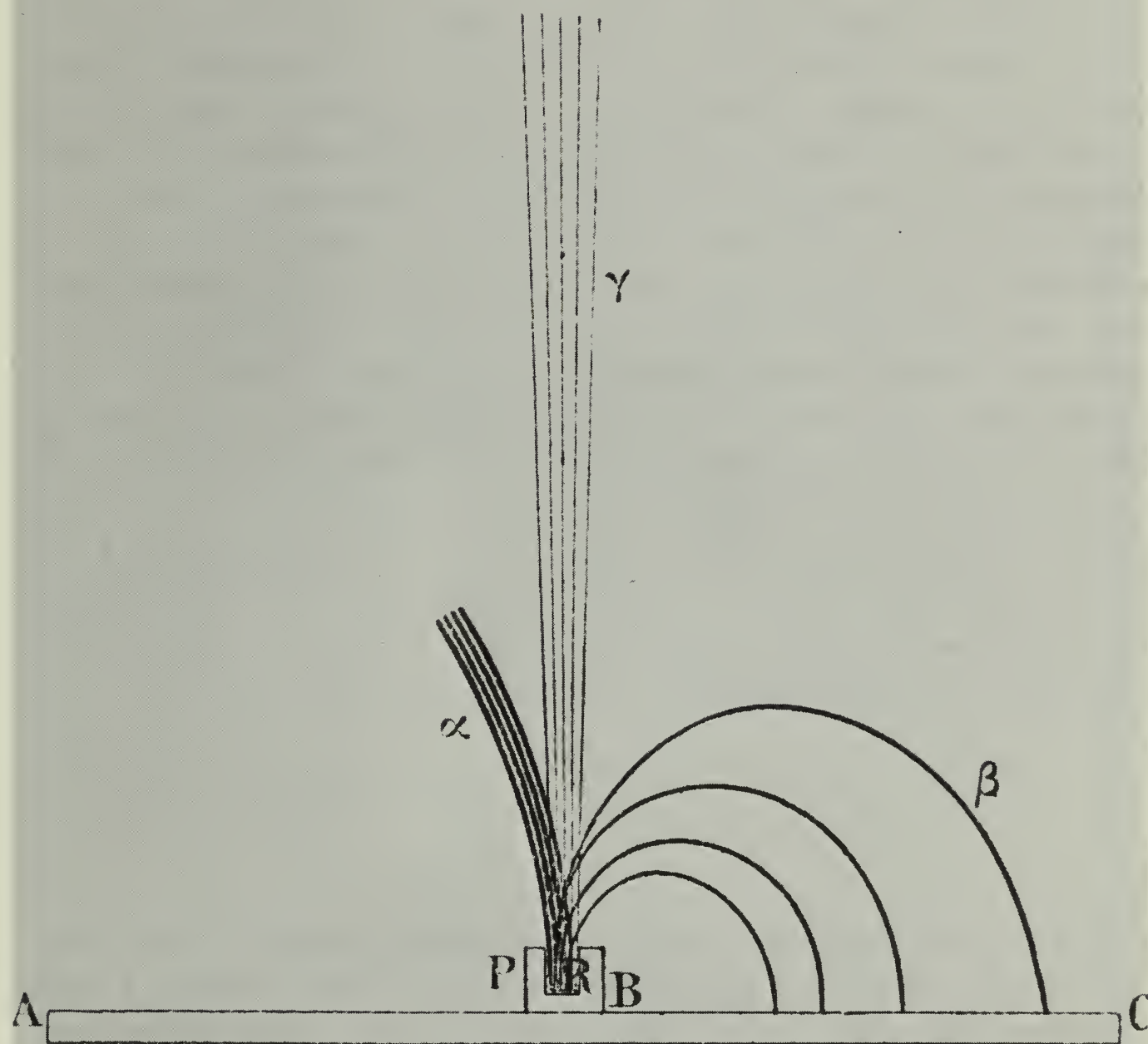
BEQUEREL, THE CURIES AND RADIOACTIVITY. The 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics went to Antoine Henri Becquerel, Madame Marie Curie, and her husband, Pierre Curie. The late nineteenth century work of these three scientists led to major discoveries concerning radioactivity and its sources. Becquerel discovered uranium to emit penetrating radiation spontaneously and continuously, while the Curies isolated radium and polonium, strong sources of radioactivity.

The BYU Library has been fortunate to acquire the publications which detailed their findings: Becquerel's highly significant *Recherches Sur une Propriete Nouvelle de la Matiere* [Research on a new property of matter], Madame Curie's *Recherches Sur Les Substances Radioactives* [Research on radioactive substances], as well as Curie's influential articles on pitchblende, published in *Des Comptes Rendus des Seances de L'Academie de Sciences* [Reports of the meetings of the Academy of Sciences] (July–December, 1898, Vol. 27).

Becquerel's study of radioactivity began as he tried to duplicate the 1895 X-ray findings of Wilhelm Roentgen. In his attempts, Becquerel happened to use a stone containing uranium. It was soon apparent that emissions similar to X-rays were given off by the sample, except that no electric field was necessary to stimulate the discharge of this radiation as was the case in Roentgen's tests. Surprised at this

inverse de celui qui a lieu pour les rayons β .
 on recouvre la cuve d'un écran mince en alumi

Fig. 4.



d'épaisseur), les rayons α sont en très

phenomenon, Becquerel soon discovered that uranium emitted alpha particles, beta particles, and gamma rays—but not X-rays. These findings were described in the library's recent acquisition, Becquerel's *Recherches*. In its original wrappers, the copy is in fine condition, having been published in Paris in 1903.

Curie's major work, *Recherches Sur Les Substances Radioactives*, is the thesis which she presented in 1903, prerequisite to receiving her doctorate degree in physics. In it she discussed the theoretical foundations for her studies of radioactivity. Curie's group of articles disclosed important findings she and her husband made relative to the properties of pitchblende (*pechblend*) and its components. After Becquerel's discovery, Madame Curie had been motivated to begin a systematic study of the ores, uranium and thorium. The result of her tests were the articles concerning pitchblende, a highly radioactive substance which contains radium and polonium. From one ton of pitchblende, one gram of radium chloride was extracted in 1902. In 1910, pure radium was finally isolated. This element possessed such strong radioactivity that it seemed to contradict the basic laws of physics. Ramifications of the research done by Becquerel and the Curies have been evident in science for the past seventy-five years. We are pleased to have copies of some of their great works which mark the early pioneering efforts in the study of radioactivity.

OXFORD LECTERN BIBLE. Among the highlights of the Harold B. Lee Library's growing collection of fine printing is a copy of perhaps the most perfect Bible printed in the twentieth century. Designed by Bruce Rogers, the Oxford Lectern Bible illustrates the art which is inherent in every carefully prepared volume of print. It represents not only a milestone in the field of modern fine printing, but also the attainment of an ideal after which printers of every era have sought. This beautiful printing of the King James Version provides a striking focal point for the library's collection of the printer's art.

THE
HOLY BIBLE

Containing the Old and New
Testaments : Translated out
of the Original Tongues and
with the former Translations
diligently compared and re-
vised by His Majesty's special
Command

Appointed to be read in Churches

OXFORD
Printed at the University Press
1935

Bruce Rogers' art is evident on the title page of the Lecturn Bible.

In the early twentieth century, King George V of England commissioned O. F. Morshead, the librarian of Windsor Castle, to locate a Bible suitable as a royal gift. The diligent librarian called upon numerous printing establishments, among which was the Oxford University Press. Unable to find a Bible handsome enough at Oxford, Mr. Morshead searched elsewhere, but Oxford's Humphrey Milford recognized an unsatisfied need and took upon himself the challenge of preparing a Bible to fit the King's description. Milford's desire was to create a magnificent piece of fine printing which was also practically suited for church use. He in turn sought the help of the noted American printer Bruce Rogers, and the tedious task began.

Rogers was recognized as one of the rising young authorities in the field of fine printing. He not only knew the technicalities of his profession but also exercised great creativity and variety in letter and type composition. His innovative approach yielded a number of easy-to-read, beautifully constructed volumes, the foremost of which is the Oxford Lectern Bible. Rogers' objectives for this masterpiece paralleled Milford's motivation for producing the Bible: perfect balance between aesthetic appearance and practicality.

In structuring a Bible for church use, size and legibility are the chief concerns. The Oxford Bible's size is therefore twelve inches by sixteen inches so as to fit the standard brass lecterns of most English churches. It contains 1238 pages in compliance with the royal limit of 1250 pages. There are 4,631,056 letters in the combined Bible—Apocrypha, averaging approximately 3,700 letters per page. Simple, unelaborate Centaur print was the type selected as most appropriate for clear reading.

The Centaur print is not only plainly legible, but also quite elegant in its simplicity. A few of the letters, however, were too large for Rogers' tastes. As a result, he painstakingly cut down thirteen lower-case letters by hand in order to improve spacing appearance. In November of 1929, the first rough copy was sent to Oxford for print, and in December of that year, the early pages of Genesis were ready for review. After careful scrutiny, Rogers still was dissatisfied with the general appearance and began to individually respace letters throughout the entire first book of the Bible. When he was satisfied that the printers understood the visual beauty and precision he de-

Psalms

PSALM 23

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

¶2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

¶3 He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

¶4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

¶5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

¶6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

An example of the Bible's elegant text.

sired, Rogers left the remaining spacing decisions to them. The final product was a large volume containing the Old and New Testaments, Apocrypha, and translator's note. Being one of 200 original copies, the volume owned by Brigham Young University also boasts a coveted "limitation page." Rogers' meticulous care and instinctive feel for printing combined to create an individual masterpiece of each page.

Interesting pragmatic sidelights join with countless strokes of deftness and artistry to create a work of prestige and singularity in the library's collection. The Oxford Lectern Bible exhibits one of the foremost examples of modern fine printing in existence. In the words of Bruce Rogers, a rigorous critic of his own and others' works, "I venture to say that I believe this Bible, from beginning to end, to be the finest and most consistent example of composition and make-up that has been produced in our day."¹ The BYU Library is proud of an acquisition of such high quality.

¹Bruce Rogers, *An Account of the Making of the Oxford Lectern Bible* (Philadelphia: Lanston Monotype Machine Co., 1939?), p. 12.



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